

# EVENTS LEADING TO GREATEST OF FIGHTS

Controversy Goes Back to Defeat of Tommy Burns by Jack Johnson.

## OBSTACLES ARE OVERCOME

Hard for Fight Fans to Realize That Date Is Really Here at Last.

December 25, 1908—Jack Johnson defeats Tommy Burns in Sydney, Australia, thereby winning the world championship.

January 17, 1909—Jeffries comes out of his retirement and appears in a vaudeville turn in San Francisco.

April 10, 1909—Jeffries announces from the stage in New York that he will fight Jack Johnson for the heavyweight championship of the world.

July 24, 1909—Jeffries ends his theatrical season at Minneapolis and leaves immediately with his manager, Sam Berger, for New York to post \$5,000 forfeit to fight Johnson.

July 25, 1909—Jeffries posts his \$5,000 forfeit to fight Johnson.

August 2, 1909—Johnson posts \$5,000 forfeit in Chicago to fight Jeffries.

August 5, 1909—Jeffries sails for Germany with his wife.

August 11, 1909—First articles of agreement to fight are signed by Sam Berger, representing Jeffries, and Jack Johnson.

October 22, 1909—Jeffries returns to America from Germany, and announces his readiness to sign articles.

October 29, 1909—Jeffries and Johnson meet at the Hotel Albany, New York, where they sign final articles of agreement and each post \$5,000 additional.

December 1, 1909—Promoters and principals meet at Meyers Hotel, Hoboken, N. J., where bids were submitted for the fight amounting to hundreds of thousands of dollars.

December 3, 1909—Jack Johnson and Tex Rickard are awarded the fight, their bid providing for a purse of \$101,000 and two-thirds of the moving picture receipts to the pugilists.

December 3, 1909—Jack Johnson and Tex Rickard sign articles to box forty-five rounds or more on July 4, 1910, the date to be divided on a basis of 75 and 25 per cent.

January 22, 1910—Rickard announces that the big fight will be held in Salt Lake City.

February 8, 1910—Definitely decided that the fight would be held in California instead of Utah.

February 13, 1910—Jeffries ends his theatrical tour at Duluth, Minn., and leaves for coast.

March 19—Emeryville race track selected as site for contest.

April 5, 1910—Jeffries opens his training camp at Rowdennan and begins his work of getting in shape for the big fight.

May 3, 1910—Thirty thousand dollars, second instalment of the purse, turned over to Tim Sullivan, the stakeholder.

May 4, 1910—Promoters and managers meet to select a referee, but fail to reach an agreement.

May 9, 1910—Johnson begins actual training at Reno, Nev.

May 16, 1910—Managers and promoters again meet to select a referee, and finally compromise by naming Promoter "Tex" Rickard. Promoters announce that the fight will be held in San Francisco instead of Emeryville.

June 15, 1910—Governor Gillett, of California, takes steps to stop the big fight.

June 20, 1910—Rickard announces he will take fight to Nevada.

June 21, 1910—Reno selected as the place for the big fight.

June 22, 1910—Jeffries arrives in Reno and goes to his training quarters at Moana Springs.

June 24, 1910—Johnson arrives at Reno.

July 4, the date that promises to see the climax of the Jeffries-Johnson controversy, has at last arrived, and a long expected public will finally be given the opportunity of witnessing what it is supposed will be the greatest fight in the history of the prize ring.

The size of the principals in the pugilistic world would alone suffice to arouse world-wide interest; but added to these are the long list of exciting incidents which led up to the contest.

For eighteen months the sporting pages of every paper in the country have given to an eager public the latest developments in the great contest. Statements made one day would be denied the next until the readers became so confused and skeptical that a number are no doubt unable to realize that the day of the big fight is at hand, and are pinching themselves to find out if they are really awake.

First, the question as to whether Jeffries really would meet the big negro had to be settled. This took several months. After considerable wrangling, during which several months' stoppage by articles were finally signed, and the announcement made that the principals were ready to receive bids.

Date Decided On.

Out of a mass of Wall Street figures

those presented by "Tex" Rickard and Jack Gleason were selected, and the date of the battle decided on.

A long and arduous training of the principals finally started, and the weeks wrangling over a referee, and no sooner were things nicely settled than the thunderclap came when the Governor of California said that he would not permit the contest.

In double quick time the promoters met and arranged to hold the fight in Nevada, and Reno was selected for this history-making contest.

Although Jack Johnson had challenged Jeffries before the latter retired from the ring in 1905, the history of the present contest began on December 26, 1908, when Johnson defeated Tommy Burns in Sydney, Australia, and won the world's championship.

Immediately the entire sporting world in voice had the question, "Will you fight Johnson?" at Jim Jeffries, who was living a life of ease on his farm near Los Angeles. Every one knew that the big ex-champion was the only man available to bring the world's best back into the ring, and that Jeffries was as much a claim.

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As a preliminary step he took an extensive hunting trip. On April 5 Jeffries began his training at Rowdennan, Cal. He had made arrangements for a husky group of trainers, including Bob Armstrong, Joe Choyenski, Farmer Burns, Jim Corbett and several lesser lights in the pugilistic world to help him in his preparation.

And they all joined the camp some time within the following month.

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Rickard Accepted.

The second meeting did not prove much better. After several hours of bitter wrangling Johnson proposed Tex Rickard, one of the promoters, and Berger agreed to this selection, and in spite of Rickard's protests he was selected to referee the fight, unless the principals could come to an agreement on some other man before the date of the fight.

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Promoters were informed that the fight could be submitted and it was announced that the fight would be held a month later. Jeffries at the time had made arrangements to make a short tour with a troupe including Frank Gotch, the world's champion wrestler, and it was decided that the first exhibition would be given in Madison Square Garden in the latter part of November, and that the battle would be opened at this time. It was then that the hand of the law made its first appearance in the Jeffries-Johnson contest.

Police Commissioner Baker, of New York, notified the principals and their manager that the fight could be opened in New York, as it was against the law of the State. But New Jersey is not very far away from Manhattan, so on December 1 promoters and principals, and a number of onlookers, journeyed across the Hudson to Meyers Hotel, Hoboken, where the bids were opened.

Five offers were made, most of them containing six figures. The highest bid was named by Jimmy Conforth, of New York, who offered to divide the sum of \$125,000 between the principals, and the promoters to retain the moving picture privileges. They also gave the fighters two alternatives.

Had been required of all the promoters to furnish checks for \$5,000 with their bids. This requirement was met by all, but a combination of promoters, made up of "Tex" Rickard, of Ely, Nev., and Jack Gleason, of San Francisco, dazzled the eyes of both managers, and principals by laying down \$10,000 in currency in addition to the certified checks.

Ready Cash Wins.

Their bid provided for a purse of \$101,000, the fighters to take 65-2-3 per cent. of the moving picture receipts. The question was not decided that day, but it was plain to be seen that the ready cash in the hands of the Gleason-Rickard combination was certain to get a big figure when the fight was awarded. This proved true, as the announcement was made the following day that the fight would go to these men.

On December 3, 1909, all the interested parties, as well as numerous disinterested parties, again met in Hoboken, where Jeffries and Johnson signed articles to box forty-five rounds or more on July 4, 1910, for a purse of \$101,000 to be divided on a basis of 75 per cent. to the winner and 25 per cent. to the loser. Big Tim Sullivan was named as stakeholder, and the promoters turned over to him \$20,000, the first instalment of the big purse.

The next question that caused considerable agitation was the selection of a site to hold the big battle. The principals as well as Jack Gleason were strongly in favor of California, but Rickard, hung out for Nevada, and on January 22 announced that the fight would be held in Salt Lake City. A few weeks later, however, Governor William Spry, of Utah, took a determined stand in favor of California, and it was against the law of the State, and that if the promoters attempted to hold it there he would put a stop to the contest. On account of this opposition Utah was abandoned, and on February 8 it was agreed that the fight would be held in California.

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